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SUBJECT: The Current Situation in Albania

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Resistance Activity in Albania

A bomb explosion in the Soviet Legation at Tirana on 19 February has focussed attention on anti-Communist activity in Albania. The explosion caused some damage and wounded several persons, and, as a result, two or three hundred people have reportedly been arrested. The incident is considered significant as a manifestation of hostility toward the USSR as well as toward the Hoxha regime.

Reports of resistance activity within Albania have been received for some time and since last fall there have been consistent clandestine flights over the country. Resistance activity has apparently consisted of uncoordinated, small-scale incidents, less dramatic than the bombing of the Soviet Legation, and clandestine flights have to a considerable degree concentrated on air drops of propaganda leaflets attacking the Hoxha regime.

Although the situation does not appear to be critical from the standpoint of the stability of the regime, it has caused concern to the Albanian leaders and has been sufficient to prompt increasingly repressive security measures and to stimulate measures aimed at the complete sovietization of the country. The regime, in its propaganda, has called for more intensive prosecution of "enemies of the people" and, in attacking the "aggressive" designs of Yugoslavia and Greece, has appealed to the patriotic sentiments and traditional hatreds of the Albanian people. Security troops in northern Albania were strengthened last fall, and the government issued a special decree on 26 February 1951 directing that all terrorist organizations and activity against the regime be disbanded within ten days, threatening rapid and harsh action against violators of the decree.

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since the fall of 1950 the political climate in Albania has changed rapidly as Albanian officials have yielded control to Soviet specialists, whose number increases daily. At the same time, the Albanian Government has passed Soviet-inspired laws reorganizing industry and agriculture, and there has been a shift of several Cabinet ministers within the government. Furthermore, the ninth plenum of the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party, held in Tirana from 19-23 February, concentrated on the strengthening of Communist Party organizations throughout the country and the mobilization of effort in support of the regime's political and economic programs.

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A recent newspaper report on conditions in Albania (Washington Post, 19 March, page 1, column seven) tended to telescope the events of several months and thus present the situation as more critical than it actually is. It is believed that governmental repressive measures are such that, before any widespread revolt could develop, the Albanian people would have to be convinced that outside assistance on a large scale was imminent. In the meantime, resistance activity poses a continuing but not insurmountable problem to the Albanian regime and the USSR.

Soviet Activity in Albania

Soviet activity in Albania has apparently been directed primarily at the consolidation of control over the country. An official of the Yugoslav General Staff stated recently that he was positive there are no Soviet troops located in Albania, although he was aware that Soviet military and civilian technicians are in Albania. Regarding the recurrent question of submarine activity and the construction of submarine bases on Saseno Island, a

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[redacted] the Yugoslav Government had positive information as of 1 February that there was no new construction on Saseno Island or in Valona Bay, but that the Albanians and Russians were merely rehabilitating the World War II defenses of the island. He considered reports of submarine training entirely without foundation.

For the present at least, Communist propaganda concerning the alleged Yugoslav-Greek threat to Albania is probably intended to justify the intensification of Soviet control over the country. However, current propaganda charges could be expanded and used to "justify" a Soviet or Satellite attack against Yugoslavia as assistance to Albania in resisting "aggression," should the Kremlin decide to launch such an attack.

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